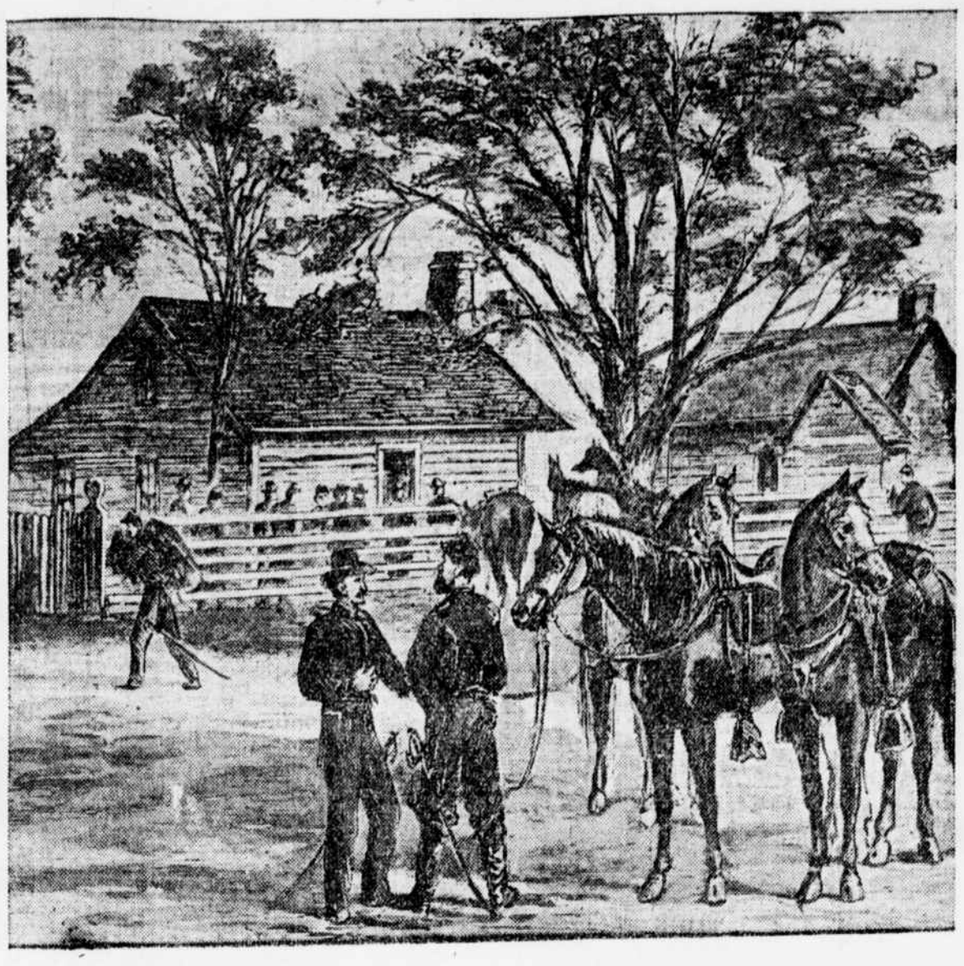
Sherman's March Through the Carolina Swamps Left a Trail of Ruins

His Movement North to Join Grant Ended in the Surrender of Johnston in a Little Cabin Near Durham, North Carolina, on April 26, 1865.

This Article of the Tribune's Civil War Series Tells of News That Meant Peace and Made Grave Generals Turn Somersaults with Joy.



HOUSE NEAR DURHAM, N. C., WHERE JOHNSTON SURRENDERED.
(Reproduced from "Harper's Weekly," through the courtesy of the publishers.)

SHERMAN'S "march to the sea" was a picnic compared with his march north from the Carolinas on his way to a junction with Grant's army in Virginia. There is not so much romance connected with marches for miles through swamps and through water waist deep as there is with a jaunt through a clean and salubrious country abounding in chickens, turkey gobblers and young pigs. Not that there were no turkeys and juicy porkers of tender days in the Carolinas! There were too many other features of a less agreeable nature! Is a mirage of an oasis more tantalizing to a thirsty traveller in the desert than a clear stream purling along by the roadside, laden with disease germs to a dry-throated trooper trudging along on the highway? It may be that many persons are devotees of the form of physical exercise which George Washington, W. E. Gladstone and Theodore Roosevelt have exalted so highly, but when virtue becomes a necessity to the extent of corduroying scores of miles of road, some of the stretches not once, but twice, the exercise becomes less enjoyable, regardless of its invigorating qualities.

Sherman, according to common report, once discussed the hellishess of war. There are other diabolical features than those connected with the slaying of human beings. They are pillaged and burned homes. Sherman and his generals were humane and tried to protect property, but—accidentally or otherwise, no one will ever positively know which—the wake of their army through the Carolinas was marked by the ruins of more than one large town.

The civil administration of Savannah, one of the fruits of his march through Georgia, did not interest Sherman nearly so much as guiding an army through unknown country. So, as soon as he could get his army in condition for the proposed five hundred-mile march north to Virginia—and this was rapidly accomplished—he and his sixty thousand men started for their Northern goal. Between lay great pine forests, swamps of broad extent and deep rivers, one with as many as seventeen channels to be bridged. It was in the opening days of February, 1865, that, provided with ample stores and ammunition, he set forth. General O. O. Howard, the kind, courteous gentleman, commanded the right wing, consisting of the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps under John A. Logan, dark, almost bronzed, of fiery, commanding eye, the dashing general, and Frank P. Blair, strongly marked in feature and talented and energetic. The left wing was under the direction of General Henry W. Slocum, who spent his later years in New York as a lawyer and whose name was given to an ill-fated steamer plying the waters of the harbor. His command was made up of the Fourteenth Corps, under General Jeff C. Davis, who had been a lieutenant at Sumter when it was fired upon in 1861, and A. S. Williams, a native of Connecticut. The cavalry was led by the active Kilpatrick.

"THE BRIDGING OF CHAOS."

The early stages of the march were devoid of opposition from the enemy, although Nature did her best to delay the movements of so unconquerable a general as Sherman. "Mere quaking causeways in a sea of mud, and the bridging of chaos for hundreds of miles" as one general put it, were all successfully accomplished, and the enemy kept busy wondering where Sherman was going. By skillful movements on the right and left he created the impression that Charleston and Augusta were his goals. So well were his plans hidden that the Confederates could not tell where he might be expected to turn up next. Sometimes important lines of communication where opposition was to be expected were possessed without a show of resistance.

The railroad line between Charleston and Augusta was considered of great importance. As General Howard approached it, expecting to meet a considerable force, he deployed his men in readiness. While the preparations for battle were in progress, one of his foragers came galloping down the road on a white horse, guided by means of a bridle.

"Hurry up, General," he shouted, as he loped along, "we've got the railroads." The line had been captured by a squad of "bummers."

On February 16 Sherman rode down to the bank of the Congaree River, opposite Columbia, the capital of South Carolina. The stone piers of the bridge, which had been fired by the Confederates themselves before they fled from their city, could be seen in the foreground. On the other side rose the gray granite walls of the unfinished State House. Smoke floated lazily away from the smouldering ruins of the railroad station. Occasionally, a few citizens or cavalrymen could be seen running across the streets. Quite a number of negroes appeared to be busily engaged in piling up bags of grain or meal near the burned station. A Union battery was throwing a few shells into the town.

"What are you firing for?" General Sherman inquired of its captain.

The artillery officer addressed replied that he could see rebel cavalry occasionally at the street crossings, and that he thought there was a considerable force of infantry hidden on the opposite bank to resist an attempt to cross the river.

OCCUPATION OF COLUMBIA.

"Do not fire any more into the town," said Sherman. "You may burst a few shells near the depot to scare away the negroes and fire three shots at the State House." These shots were fired, and Sherman has declared that this was all the basis there was for the much discussed and investigated charges of firing upon the town. The following morning he crossed the river on a bridge built by General Howard's engineers and entered the city. A boisterous wind was blowing and flakes of cotton were drifting along through the air like flakes of snow. Near the market square he passed some of his men working an old fire engine in an effort to put out the fire in a pile of bales of cotton, which, he was told, had been started by the Confederate cavalry. Turning his horse on the sidewalk in order to get past the flaming cotton, he entered the market square, where were collected many whites and negroes. They pressed around him. Dr. Goodwin, the elderly Mayor of the place, was extremely anxious about the protection of the private property of the citizens, and was reassured in this regard. Several men forced their way to the side of his horse and explained that they were Union officers, who had been prisoners at Columbia and had escaped from the prison. One of them handed the general a paper which he thrust into his breast pocket, the request accompanying it being that he read it at his leisure.

He finally reached the house which Dr. Goodwin had placed at his disposal. Following his custom he went through his pockets for the various papers and memoranda which were likely to accumulate there and found the paper which had been handed to him in the square. It proved to be a song entitled "Sherman's March to the Sea," which had been composed by Adjutant Byers, of the 5th Iowa Infantry. The composer and his fellow prisoners had sung it while shut up in the Columbia asylum. General Sherman considered it so good that he immediately sent for the poet-soldier, attached him to his staff, provided him with horse and equipment and later made use of him as a bearer of dispatches to Washington. He preserved the song in his "Memoirs," evidently preferring it to "Marching Through Georgia," which he heard so frequently wherever he went that he used to attempt to escape whenever he decently could.

That evening, while lying on a bed where he had dropped his weary frame, he noticed a light on the wall. It grew brighter and brighter. Calling a member of his staff, he inquired the meaning.

"There seems to be a house on fire down in the neighborhood of the market house," was the reply. Fearing the consequences, owing to the high wind, he asked his aid to go in person and investigate. The report was that the block of buildings opposite the cotton which had been seen burning earlier in the day was on fire and the fire was spreading. This was believed to be the origin of the much discussed conflagration. When the sun rose the following morning, bright and clear, it shone upon the fragments of walls and chimneys representing more than half of the attractive city of Columbia. The capital of the Palmetto State, the centre of the secession movement, had without intention upon the part of any one paid a high price. Here and there groups of the inhabitants stood about small heaps of furniture, representing all they had been able to save. The inhabitants of that pretty little city were ready to agree with Sherman about the character of war.

Doing what he could for the comfort of the homeless, and leaving with the Mayor five hundred beef cattle and one hundred muskets with which to arm a guard to maintain order after he left, General Sherman marched away toward Cheraw and Fayetteville.

The Confederates had been concentrating such available troops as they had to the northeastward. The garrison of Charleston, under Hardee, had abandoned that city and was co-operating with Wheeler, Wade Hampton and a corps of Hood's old army under General Beauregard. Sherman made as if he would go toward Charlotte, with no intention of going there. Rumors began to reach him that Charleston had been evacuated by Hardee and occupied by Union forces and that Wilmington, N. C., had also fallen into the hands of friendly troops. He could get no better information than rumors, however, for he was as isolated from communication with the outside world as if he were in the middle of the Congo in the days of Stanley. All that the government knew about him was that he was somewhere in the heart of the Carolinas moving toward the north. When and where he would come out were not certain.

Sherman had been travelling with the left wing. Learning on March 2 that Howard's wing had reached Cheraw, he decided to cross over to him. Early in the morning of the following day he rode out of Chesterfield with the 20th Corps, forded Thompson's Creek and at the top of the hill beyond found a road branching to the right. It corresponded with one indicated on his map as leading to Cheraw. A negro was standing by the roadside.

"What road is this?" he asked, reining in his handsome and prancing horse.

"Him lead to Cheraw, massa," replied the negro, his eyes resting on Sherman's horse, restively picking up and setting down his feet.

"Is it a good road, and how far?"

"A very good road, and eight or ten miles."

"Any guerrillas?"

"Oh, no, massa. Dey is gone two days ago. You could have played cards on deir ccattails, dey was in sich a hurry."

Supported by such convincing evidence of the freedom of the country from enemies, General Sherman decided to strike off across country with no other escort than his staff; he signalled to his aids and turned down the road.

Soon afterward General Barry asked the same negro for information regarding the roads.

"Dey say Massa Sherman will be along soon," replied the negro.

"Why," said General Barry, "that was General Sherman you were talking to."

Instantly the negro fell into an attitude which suggested that he was about to pray. "De great God!" he exclaimed, his eyes following the antics of Sherman's horse. "Just look at his horse!"

Running after the Union commander, he trotted along by his side for a mile, imparting all the information he possessed, but seeming to admire the horse more than its rider.

A drizzling rain was falling when Sherman entered Cheraw, a couple of hours later, and went to the house occupied by General Blair. General Blair invited him to luncheon, as his headquarters wagons had not come up. An excellent meal was found on the table in the basement. On the sideboard stood some dusty bottles of wine.

"Will you have some wine?" asked General Blair.

A bottle was opened. It was so extraordinarily good that Sherman asked where it came from.

"Do you like it?" was the only response he could get from General Blair, as he held up a glass and examined the color. Sherman insisted on knowing where he got it, but could get no other reply except a query as to whether he wanted some. After his wagons came up a case of what he has declared to be the best Madeira he ever tasted was sent over to his bivouac. He learned afterward that some of the aristocratic families of Charleston had sent eight wagonloads of the wine, besides many fine rugs and carpets, up to Cheraw for safety. Apparently they had expected Sherman to visit their city.

PLANS TO OPPOSE JOHNSTON.

While he was in Cheraw, where he remained until March 6, awaiting the passage of the army over the Great Pedee River, he found in a house which had been occupied by General Hardee, the Confederate commander, a copy of The New-York Tribune, dated a month later than any paper from the North which he had seen. He read it with a great deal of interest, particularly a paragraph which contained the information that Sherman would undoubtedly be heard from next at Goldsboro and that General Joseph E. Johnston had been placed in command of all the troops which could be brought to bear upon Sherman. Realizing that Hardee had read the paper before he did and therefore knew his plans, he gave up any further befogging flank movements and prepared to meet Johnston. Goldsboro, the important railroad centre, whose possession would have a throttling effect upon the operations of Lee's army, because of the lines running north and south and east and west through it, in reality was Sherman's destination.

On March 8, having crossed the Great Pedee and being on the way to Fayetteville, Sherman determined to send messages down to Wilmington. Two men in disguise set off that night, one floating down the Cape Fear River in a boat, each carrying a dispatch in cipher asking that a steamer be sent up the river to Fayetteville with certain supplies, and that word be got to General Schofield, who had been brought East and dispatched to the Carolina coast by boat, that he would expect to meet that general at Goldsboro about March 20.

Sunday, March 12, found the whole army encamped around Fayetteville, on the Cape Fear River. It had entered the town on the day before, according to schedule, on the heels of Hardee and Hampton, who had burned the bridge behind them. A Sabbath stillness pervaded the streets, for the people were of the pious stock of the Scotch Covenanters and the army was resting after its six weeks of hard marching through muddy swamps and over corduroy roads. Shortly after noon the whistling of a steamboat was heard in the distance. It came nearer and nearer. Then a shouting burst forth along the river. It echoed along the street. There was something electric about it, for it presaged the breaking of a prolonged silence from home. Soon a florid faced seafaring man, who proved to be Captain Ainsworth, came up the street, acompanied by a group of officers. He was bearing a small mail bag and had come from General Terry, at Wilmington. The couriers had succeeded in working their way down the river and this was the prompt response. Preparations were quickly under way for the sending of dispatches to Washington, and Captain Byers, the rescued rong writer, was selected to sail with them on the boat at 6 o'clock that evening. Some of the refugees who had travelled with the army from Columbia were also to go down the river to Wilmington on the boat. A train of thousands of negroes which had been accumulating in his wake was later started toward the same place.

CONFEDERATES FIGHT HARD.

So far as armed resistance was concerned, General Sherman was no longer to have the easy time he had had until he reached Fayetteville. Joseph Johnston, he knew from experience, was no mean opponent. So he made all preparations to meet the foe, whom he estimated to number thirty-seven thousand. On March 15, the entire army being across the river, it marched cautiously forward, encountering Hardee near Averysboro. The opposition was stubborn, but a left flank movement broke up the resistance and resulted in captures of men and guns.

Sherman received something of a shock of surprise on March 19, when he was riding with the right wing in company with General Howard. He had heard some firing in the direction of Slocum's right wing, which he had left the night before thinking that all danger was over. This he ascribed to some measure of opposition from Hardee and Hampton, no more dangerous than that at Averysboro. What was his astonishment, therefore, when a young man, under twenty years of age, a member of General Slocum's staff, came riding up at full speed and delivered a message which indicated that his chief was confronted at Bentonville by Johnston's whole army. The young man was Joseph B. Foraker, who recently was a United States Senator from Ohio. General Slocum, when he learned the peril of his position, had dispatched the young man with the injunction: "Ride well to the right, so as to keep clear of the enemy's left flank, and don't spare horseflesh." This injunction had been obeyed and he reached Sherman just at sundown.

Word was sent back to Slocum to fight on the defensive, to save time, and that Howard would come on the enemy's rear from the east. All this time Slocum was doing his best to repel the enemy, who had lined up in a "V," with the flanks resting on Mill Creek and inclosing the village of Bentonville.

General Sherman was not the only officer who received a shock at Bentonville. General Carlin's division had the advance of General Slocum's line. Unconscious of the superiority of the force in front, he had gone in to develop the strength of the enemy. Slocum was consulting with General Jeff C. Davis, the commander of the 14th Corps, when Colonel Litchfield, inspector general of the corps, rode up and, in response to an inquiry, said:

"Well, general, I have found something more than Dibrell's cavalry. I find infantry intrenched along our whole front, and enough of them to give us all the amusement we shall want for the rest of the day."

LUCK FAVORS UNION FORCES.

Shortly after Foraker left with his message for General Sherman, on which so much seemed to depend, the Confederates advanced with an energy that drove Carlin back. Courageously both sides fought, but the Confederate line, as it pushed on, became broken in its passage through the woods and was not able to present a compact front to the fire which it received from behind the hastily improvised intrenchments. It finally fell back, but from time to time fresh assaults were made upon Slocum's line. These were repulsed, and that night Haven's division reported to the Union commander.

The next morning other troops came to his assistance, and the day was spent in strengthening the federal position. On the

Continued on seventh page.

What Will Be Done with Dr. Johnson's House in Gough Square?

Johnson Club, of London, Debates the Use To Be Made of Relic Rescued by Cecil Harmsworth.

London, December 29.

THE annual supper of the Johnson Club was eaten by candlelight by nearly forty members and guests in the old house in Gough Square. The fare was the usual anomalous combination of pea soup and rump steak, kidney, lark, oyster and mushroom pudding, with apple pie and cream toasted cheese, rum punch and church wardens' pipes as after thoughts. Not only good fellowship, but interesting talk as well, followed this stimulative diet, for the Johnsonians were for the first time in the famous house where the Dictionary was made, and they were under obligation to let Mr. Cecil Harmsworth know what they thought about the future of the relic, which had been rescued from the housebreaker by his generosity. The tenants had been turned out; the partitions and obstructions involved by continuous use for the printers' trade had been removed, and the house had been thoroughly cleaned and restored approximately to the condition in which Dr. Johnson left it after living and working there from 1749 to 1760. Mr. Harmsworth had already purchased the adjoining structure for the protection of the old house; and the removal of a shed on the site of the garden "as big as a bed quilt" was recommended. On the general subject of the use to be made of the venerable relic there was a long evening's talk.

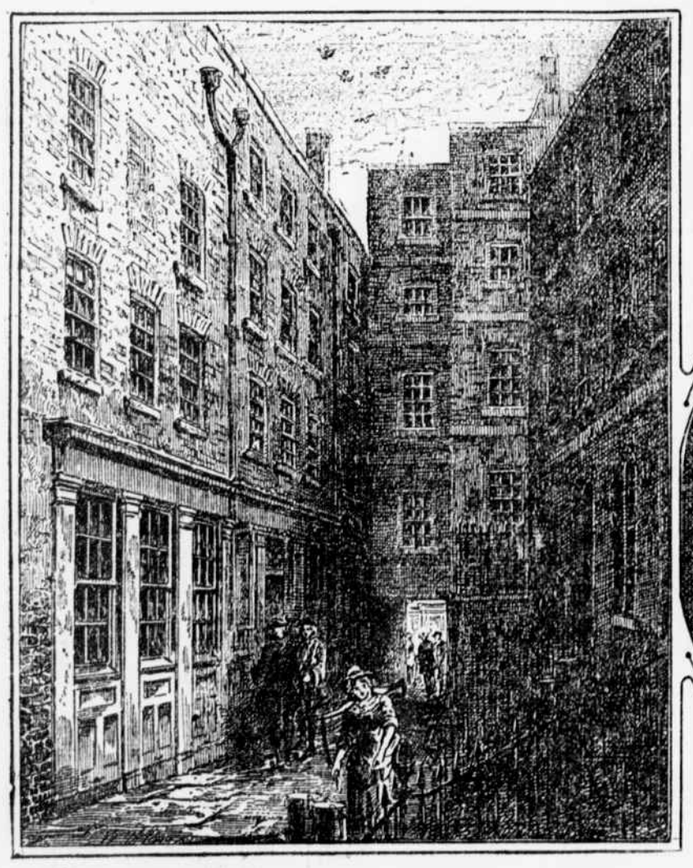
The suggestion that the Johnson Club and other literary societies should be permanently housed in Gough Square was not seriously considered. The members and their guests had explored the "oak-balustraded house" from the steep central staircase, admired the oak panelling of the drawing room and dining room, peeped into the bedrooms on the second and third floors and made the circuit of the large attic where Dr. Johnson worked with his apprentices. It was evident that the rooms were not suitably arranged for use by literary societies, and that the Johnson Club itself would not welcome permanent accommodation there, inspiring as the associations might be. Mr. Clement Shorter, after reciting the history of the house, recommended its conversion into a museum, with Johnson, Reynolds, Boswell and Garrick rooms and with a miscellaneous assortment of prints, portraits, furniture, books and souvenirs. Mr. Augustine Birrell and other members supported this suggestion with opportune references to the Shakespeare birth house, the Carlyle house in Chelsea, the Burns, Bunyan and Wordsworth cottages and the treasured homes of other famous men. The members heard in anticipation the rattling of American sixpences or shillings in the till, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, having discovered that Johnson was a sympathetic friend of Ireland, promised a continuous procession of visitors from the ever faithful isle.

From Mr. Joseph Pennell suddenly came a vigorous protest against the museum project, and a clearly expressed preference for the plan of converting the house into a genuine Johnson residence, without prints on the walls and furniture and bric-à-brac of the period, but with such things as were in it when the great man lived there. He referred to the Plantin-Moretus house in Antwerp as a suitable model, since the tapestries, portraits, antique furniture and other objects reproduced the effect of the sixteenth century mansion and printing house. He might also have described the Goethe houses in Frankfort and Weimar, or Corneille's cottage at Petit Couronne as excellent illustrations of the better practice of honoring the memory of genius by reproducing the actual conditions of residence rather than by creating a modern curiosity shop with a jumble of poor prints and odds and ends. Mr. Pennell's outspoken condemnation of the museum project encouraged others to speak in the same vein. Mr. Harmsworth will do what he likes with the valuable site and historical house, which he has purchased for presentation to the nation; but it is to be hoped that American pilgrims will have full value for the gate money in a glimpse of a real Johnson interior with characteristic features of his residence and the life of his own time.

Realism might easily be overdone in the reproduction of the original atmosphere. Northcote, for example, relates that when Reynolds took Roubiliac to call upon Johnson in Gough Square they were led up into a garret, which was considered a library, "where, besides his books all covered with dust, there was an old crazy deal table, and a still worse and older elbow chair, having only three legs." Broken furniture and undusted books would not command respect for the eccentricities of genius; but it might not be impracticable to reproduce approximately the conditions of dictionary compilation. Boswell has described them; Bishop Percy has corrected some of the details, and Hawkins and other writers have added pithy anecdotes and luminous touches. The lexicographer read diligently the works of writers whose English he considered most correct, and marked passages, with a letter in the margin for the word under which each was to occur. Half a dozen amanuenses transcribed the passages on separate slips of paper and arranged them alphabetically, and finally Johnson supplied definitions and etymologies, using Skinner and other authorities. The rickety writing desks and chairs are of little account, but a library made up of the volumes, to which he frequently referred, with Bailey, Skinner and five or six Greek folios on a conspicuous shelf, would render the famous attic intensely interesting.

During his residence in Gough Square Johnson not only compiled and published the Dictionary, but also wrote "Rasselas" and a portion of the "Lives of the Poets," began the "Rambler" and the "Idler" and finished some of his best poems and essays. It was his best period of literary production and could be illustrated by editions of his works and by portraits of his famous friends. His elderly wife died in 1752, and he wrote in the study the sincere and solemn tribute to her virtues, which a country parson declined to repeat over her coffin because it seemed to him unduly laudatory. He was arrested for a paltry debt while he lived there and was rescued by Richardson from prison.

Whether No. 17 Gough Square be a catch-penny museum or a tasteful, dignified residence consecrated to the memory of a great man, it will have without doubt a large measure of American patronage whenever it is opened to the public. It will be a matter of indifference to the transatlantic tourist that the champion of Toryism denounced the fathers of the Revolution as rascals, robbers and pirates and declared in Boswell's hearing: "I am willing to love all mankind except an American." "No American visitor will care to remember that Johnson, after defining "pension" in his Dictionary as "pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country," accepted £300 a year from George III soon after leaving the house in Gough Square, and that he wrote, in 1775, "Taxation No Tyranny," with such bitter denunciation of the rebel colonies that ministers were forced to revise it. I. N. F.



WINE OFFICE COURT AND THE "CHESHIRE CHEESE."

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON
from the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

GOLDSMITH, BOSWELL AND JOHNSON DINING.

A TEA PARTY AT DR. JOHNSON'S.

GOUGH SQUARE.